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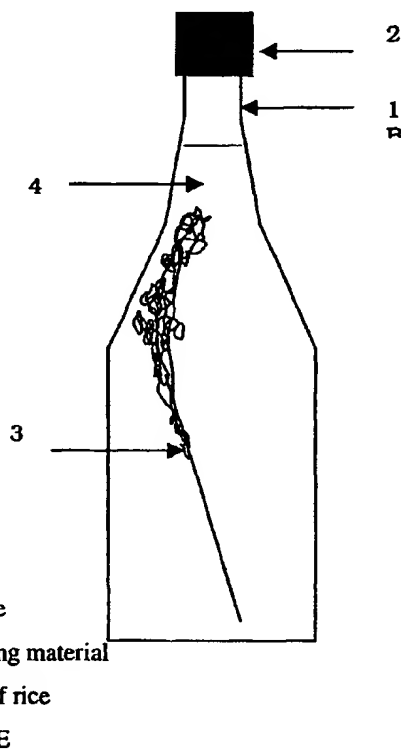
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(54) **Method for bottling sake and bottled sake**

(57) A method of bottling SAKE and the resulting bottled SAKE are disclosed. The bottling method includes placing SAKE and an ear of rice, preferably of the same variety from which the SAKE was brewed, inside a translucent bottle. The bottling method may further include separate pasteurization of the SAKE and ear of rice to eliminate bacteria, yeast, and other organisms associated with the ear of rice without impacting the SAKE quality. Seeing the variety of rice may permit the customers to recognize high quality rice as opposed to inexpensive varieties that yield undesirable SAKE.

Figure 1



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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0001] This patent relates to methods of bottling SAKE and to bottled SAKE.

Description of the Related Art

[0002] Although SAKE is brewed using rice as the base material SAKE rice is distinguishable from table rice. Knowing what kind of rice has been used in brewing the SAKE is one method of checking its quality. However, because it is rare for ordinary customers to find out the variety of rice used for making the SAKE, it is difficult for customers to judge the quality of SAKE. As a result, many customers purchase highly priced SAKE that unbeknownst to them is low in quality because it is made from low quality rice.

[0003] The variety of rice generally used as table rice is called HANMAI and is very different from SAKAMAI which is the variety of rice used to brew SAKE. Varieties of rice used for brewing SAKE include YAMADA-NISHIKI, GOHYAKUMANGOKU, OMACHI, and HATTAN-NISHIKI that contain less fat and protein than table rice varieties. These rice varieties have more white center white part, and are collectively called SHUZOU-KOUTEKIMAI

[0004] Nowadays, less of the aforementioned SHUZOU-KOUTEKIMAI is used to make SAKE. Rather, HANMAI, the inexpensive variety, and imported rice varieties that are much less suitable for making SAKE are often used. It is very rare for consumers to see SAKE from SHUZOU-KOUTEKIMAI. Therefore, a system and method for enabling customers to recognize the quality of the SAKE and instilling customer confidence is necessary.

SUMMARY

[0005] To solve the abovementioned problems, this disclosure presents bottled SAKE and a method for inserting a plant, such as an ear of rice, into a transparent SAKE bottle for distinguishing the SAKE based on the variety of rice used to make the SAKE and for instilling customer confidence, without compromising the quality of the SAKE. The structure of the disclosed bottled SAKE causes the pasteurized ear of rice to be fully soaked in pasteurized SAKE and sealed in the bottle.

[0006] According to the invention, preferably at least one part of the rice plant is disposed in the translucent bottle or other container. Preferably the part or parts of the rice plant allow identification of the rice variety it is derived from.

[0007] Inserting an ear of rice, from which the drink is brewed, into the SAKE bottle to distinguish it from inex-

pensive SAKE may instill customer confidence and show the customers that the SAKE is made from real SHUZOU-KOUTEKIMAI.

[0008] Although liqueurs containing fruit or plant such as UMESHU (Japanese UME-plum Liqueur) exist, alcoholic beverages other than sweet liqueurs do not come in bottles containing fruits or plants. In the case of SAKE, SAKE with gold flakes in the bottle exists, but other products with something in the bottle do not.

[0009] A problem arising from inserting an ear of rice into the SAKE bottle is that the organisms attached to the ear of rice will damage the quality of SAKE. Generally, SAKE is bottled and pasteurized at 65 degrees Celsius; however, if an un-pasteurized ear of rice is inserted into the bottle, the associated bacteria, mold, and yeast will not be eliminated at this temperature.

[0010] The resulting SAKE does not suffer from potential infections associated with insertion of the ear of rice in the bottle that cannot be alleviated by pasteurization of the SAKE at 65 degrees Celsius because the ear of rice is pre-pasteurized before being inserted in the SAKE bottle.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The accompanying drawing, that is incorporated in and constitutes a part of this specification, illustrates an embodiment of the invention and together with the description serves to explain the principles of the invention.

[0012] Figure 1 is a diagram of a SAKE bottle with a pasteurized ear of rice inserted therein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0013] Figure 1 is a diagram of a bottle 1 that is made of transparent or translucent material and has a desired size and shape. The top of the bottle 1 is sealed with a sealer 2, such as a stopper or a cap. An ear of rice 3 and SAKE 4, which are pasteurized before sealing, are bottled and sealed inside. For convenience, the term "translucent" shall include "transparent."

[0014] The bottle 1 may be made of translucent glass or translucent synthetic material that is not offensive to the taste of SAKE.

[0015] The ear of rice 3 is preferably of the same rice variety used to brew the SAKE 4, is inserted in the bottle 1 to fully soak in SAKE 4, and can be observed through the bottle 1 due to the clarity of bottle 1 and of the SAKE 4 liquid.

[0016] SAKE 4 is preferably pasteurized at 65 Celsius before being bottled. The rice ear 3 is also preferably pre-pasteurized because it is impossible to eliminate the bacteria, mold, and yeast that may exist on the ear of rice 3 at the pasteurizing temperature of SAKE. The rice ear 3 may be prepasteurized using some other method that will not diminish the SAKE quality. For example, the

pasteurization process may use Alcohol, Hydrogen Peroxide (H₂O₂), Hypochlorous Acid (HClO), Sorbic Acid (CH₃CH=CHCH=CHCOOH), surfactants, boiled water, or a combination of these substances and techniques.

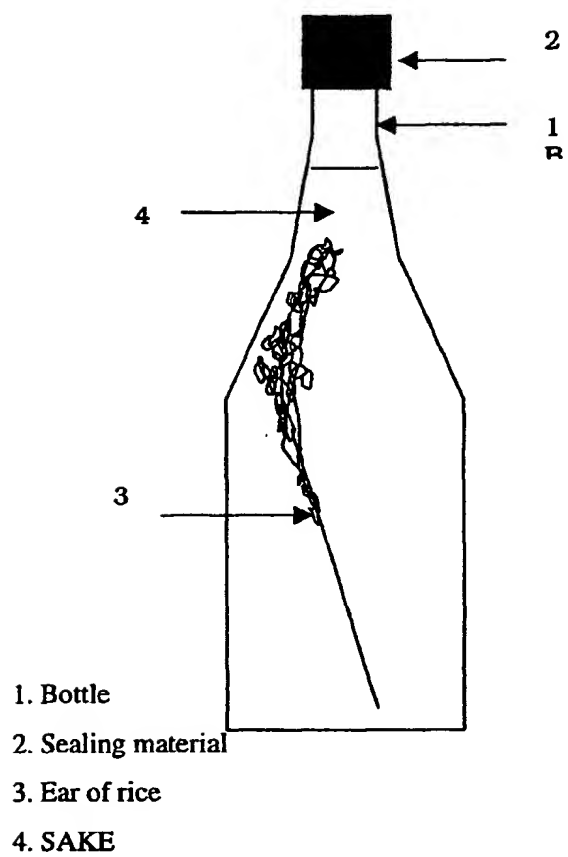
[0017] Seeing the ear of rice 3 and knowing that the SAKE 4 is made from the variety of rice showing through the bottle instills confidence in the customer. The ear of rice 3 will distinguish this SAKE from other inexpensive SAKE. Pre-pasteurizing the ear of rice 3 will help maintain the quality of SAKE.

[0018] The foregoing description of the preferred embodiments of the present invention is by way of example only, and other variations and modifications of the above-described embodiments and methods are possible in light of the foregoing teaching. The embodiments described herein are not intended to be exhaustive or limiting. The present invention is limited only by the following claims.

Claims

1. A method comprising:
 - disposing SAKE in a translucent bottle;
 - disposing at least one part of a rice plant in the translucent bottle; and
 - sealing the translucent bottle.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the part or parts of the rice plant allow identification of the rice variety it is derived from, and/or wherein the part or parts of the rice plant comprise or consist of an ear of rice and/or one or more grains of rice.
3. The method of any one of claims 1 to 2, wherein the SAKE is brewed from rice of the same variety as that of the part or parts of the rice plant, in particular of the ear of rice.
4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, further comprising:
 - pasteurising the SAKE.
5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising:
 - pasteurising the part or parts of the rice plant, in particular the ear of rice.
6. The method of any one of claims 1 to 5, further comprising:
 - pasteurising the SAKE; and
 - pasteurising the part or parts of the rice plant, in particular the ear of rice, separately from the pasteurisation of SAKE.
7. The method of claim 5 or 6, wherein the method of pasteurising the part or parts of the rice plant, in particular the ear of rice, includes using at least one of: alcohol, hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂), hypochlorous acid (HClO), sorbic acid (CH₃CH=CHCH=CHCOOH), surfactants, or boiled water.
8. An article comprising:
 - a translucent container;
 - an alcoholic beverage brewed from rice and disposed in the translucent container; and
 - at least one part of a rice plant in the translucent container.
9. The article of claim 8, wherein the part or parts of the rice plant allow identification of the rice variety it is derived from, and/or the part or parts of the rice plant comprise or consist of an ear of rice and/or one or more grains of rice.
10. The article of any one of claims 8 to 9, wherein the part or parts of the rice plant, in particular the ear of rice, is of the same variety of rice from which the alcoholic beverage was brewed.
11. The article of any one of claims 8 to 10, wherein:
 - the SAKE is pasteurised; and
 - the part or parts of the rice plant, in particular the ear of rice, is pasteurised separately from the pasteurisation of the SAKE.

Figure 1





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
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A	US 4 134 247 A (SATHER KENNETH E) 16 January 1979 (1979-01-16) * figure 3 *	1	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 013, no. 029 (C-562), 23 January 1989 (1989-01-23) & JP 63 233771 A (HIROHIKO IWAMOTO), 29 September 1988 (1988-09-29) * abstract *	1,8	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7) B65B B65D C12G C12J
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 23 April 2002	Examiner Martínez Navarro, A.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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